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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **RIBBON CUTTING A 'VIRTUAL' SUCCESS** **Free Service for City Halls, Schools, Libraries and Fire Districts**

A Virtual Ribbon Cutting Party hosted by First Step Internet of Moscow announced that global broadband service is now available to the communities of Potlatch, Deary, and Bovill.

First Step Internet has just completed the deployment of multi-megabit broadband service into each of these rural Latah County communities. The successful ribbon cutting comes after 2 ½ years of hard work that involved many people. The project originated in 2002 with a request by Latah County Rural Economic Director Chris Storhook. First Step then made application to USDA Rural Development's Broadband program and received grants totaling \$408,000.

"President Bush has emphasized the importance of universal broadband access for a dynamic and growing economy and Rural Development is one of the key agencies in making this goal a reality," said Mike Field, Idaho State Director.

The completed deployment in Potlatch, Deary, and Bovill should prove to be quite a boost for each community since the grant also included wireless broadband equipment, firewalls, and two years of free service for the City Halls, Schools, Libraries, Clinics, Fire District Buildings and Community Centers.

Each community also received 10 public access computers which will make the service available to everyone. In addition, service is available to each business and resident for a price that rivals even the biggest city in America. Mike Hall of First Step said "We would like to extend our heart-felt thanks to all those who were involved in supporting, promoting, and deploying services for this extensive project. We trust that these new services will prove to be of great benefit to each of these communities."

